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Wednesday, November 26, 1958

John Haskell left after lunch.

We spent most of the day talking about Berlin. In the Embassy we are unanimous, as are General Hamlett and the members of the Berlin Mission, in favor of a ~~minimum~~ cancellation of existing contingency instructions for travel in case Soviet personnel is replaced by GDR officials at checkpoints. We have recommended replacing existing orders by a new set, part of which would provide for an immediate turn-back of trains or vehicles if any documents should be demanded of their conductors by GDR personnel.

Ambassador Grewe came to see me this afternoon. He said nothing interesting had transpired at the German Ambassadors' meeting yesterday. Today the Foreign Office is quiet for the Chancellor, von Brentano and others are with General de Gaulle and his troupe at Bad Kreuznach.

Just before he left Washington, Grewe talked to Bob Murphy and gained from him the impression we did not wish to resort to an airlift but would like to preserve our rights to surface access to Berlin, by force if necessary. I know there is considerable sentiment in this sense in high quarters of the Pentagon. The same idea is attributed to the President himself, although we have not been told here what may be contemplated in this regard. Obviously, the

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resources of our Berlin garrison are entirely insufficient for such a purpose if they were to be seriously challenged.

About 7 o'clock tonight a storm broke out over remarks attributed to the Secretary at his press conference in Washington this morning. Our first information on the subject came from UPI and indicated Dulles ~~had~~ said the Four Western Powers were in agreement on dealing with GDR officials as agents of the Soviet Government if the Soviets wanted to turn over their existing responsibilities to the East Germans. Brandt and others in Berlin were seriously alarmed and there will be a big play tomorrow about this in the German papers.

Before the AP and Department Wireless Bulletin became available, I telephoned Livvy Merchant to tell him how seriously we view the consequences of such a statement if indeed it had actually been made. He said he had read the transcript, and the UPI story as related by me was based on a serious misinterpretation of what had actually been said. He will shortly send us the authentic text.

Later in the evening I received the exact transcript. As regards its effect on German public opinion, I am thoroughly dissatisfied with it. The Secretary displayed his usual ability to state the alternatives clearly, but in recognizing the possibility of regarding GDR officials as agents of the Soviets he is certain to alarm governmental and private circles here to a high degree. In fact

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the excitement in Berlin is such that one of the Senators is flying down tonight to talk to Rebecca Wellington about it.

This is another instance of what has always seemed to me to be the folly of discussing publicly diplomatic crises and negotiations when, as almost any reputable newspaper correspondent will admit, an answer from an official that a response would not be in the public interest would be accepted. Moreover, if the Soviet proposal has not already been prepared, it might have some influence on its content. In a lesser degree, the Secretary's utterances some time ago comparing Quemoy and Matsu to Berlin had disturbing repercussions.

Thursday, November 27, 1958

I spent the early morning talking to various people about the press conference affair, but had ~~had~~ no word on it from any member of the German Government, although von Eckardt is calling a press conference this afternoon at which it will presumably be debated. Obviously, there is only one thing for the Embassy to do and that is to support loyally the interpretation given to us in the form of a "Guidance" received here this morning. I remain extremely uneasy over the situation.

E and I went to church with Stevie and the children for the 11 o'clock Thanksgiving services, at which I read the President's

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Berlin would have unpredictable political consequences. I must expressly say to you with what gratitude the whole German people has taken note of the repeated declarations of the Governments of the United States of America, United Kingdom and France that it is the irrevocable task of the three Powers to maintain and protect the freedom of Berlin. The political measures which the Soviet Union has announced must clearly serve to put to the test the firmness and dependability of the entire policy of the free world. I speak intentionally of the free world, for in the communique which was published at the conclusion of the deliberations of the Chiefs of Government of NATO in December of last year all the member states of the Atlantic Community unanimously pledged themselves to this duty.

I am fully aware that we all assume a political risk if we in view of the imminent decision of the Soviet Union declare ourselves to be unalterably true to this task and to accept its consequences. But I do not conceal my concern that we would place in question the trustworthiness of the entire policy and solidarity of the free world if the Soviet Union succeeds, perhaps by detours and perhaps in stages, to undermine this policy. I am convinced that the Soviet Union will proceed cleverly and carefully. At first it will give out that the transfer of rights from the Four Power agreement to the government of the so-called German Democratic Republic will change nothing in the previous status and it will, as I believe also direct the authorities of the GDR at first to preserve this appearance. If we put up with this situation a second step will follow. The GDR will somehow raise the question that the free traffic of civilians is no longer permitted on the airways but requires the consent of the authorities of the GDR. Thereupon it will become impossible for hundreds of thousands of men to take the road to freedom by way of the city of Berlin. The GDR will perhaps not begin by making difficulties for

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Proclamation and Bill Tyler the first lesson, Captain Estabrook taking charge of the second lesson.

We had an early lunch on a magnificent turkey with all the usual American accessories, and then I went to the office. There I received from Washington a copy of the Chancellor's letter to the Secretary, sent to Washington on November 20, 1958, reading as follows:

"Dear Mr. Dulles

Dear Friend:

This morning the Ambassador of the Soviet Union, Mr. Smirnov, called on me to inform me officially that the Government of the Soviet Union has the intention to renounce in a few days the 'occupation statute' for the City of Berlin. The rationale for this is known to you from the declarations of the Soviet Premier, Mr. Khrushchev and from the statements of the Soviet press, especially Pravda.

Ambassador Grewe has on my instructions already talked to you about the results of these announces measures. The report of his talk with you lies before me.

Mr. von Brentano has received the British Ambassador, Minister Trimble and Minister Leduc and has informed them about the talk with Mr. Smirnow.

The close and friendly relations which bind us together induce me to bring before you in great frankness the grave concern which fills me in view of this imminent development. The status of the free part of the City of Berlin is of such decisive significance that I certainly do not say too much if I indicate that the surrender of

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the representatives of the three Western Powers and for the troops stationed in Berlin; it will place limitations upon the free traffic between Berlin and the Federal Republic and its sovereignty and in the end will paralyze it.

The political, economic, and above all, the psychological reactions in Berlin and in Germany will be unpredictable. But also concern will be aroused in other parts of the world and among the members of the Atlantic Community that the first serious concession will not be the last. In the historical controversy between Communism and the free world, the Soviet Union would thereby win without effort the first and perhaps the decisive battle.

I consider it urgently necessary that we make ourselves clear concerning this danger with all frankness and with all earnestness. I am also writing in the same sense to the British Prime Minister, Mr. Macmillan. As you know, I will meet on next Wednesday with the French Premier, General De Gaulle; we have already put this question on the agenda of the meeting. Moreover, I consider it especially desirable, yes necessary, that we without delay come together in a meeting of the four governments when the Soviet Union makes its measures known. We can decide in short order about the time and place of such a meeting through our Ambassadors.

With warmest greetings,

As ever,

Your,

/s/ ADENAUER."

I was scheduled to go to Berlin tomorrow night and remain there until Tuesday night, but under the circumstances am trying to alter my plans and spend only Sunday in Berlin where I would attend